

RARE FRUIT NO. 1558

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace.”
Isaiah 57:19.*

“THE fruit of the lips”! The lips are neither trees of the orchard nor herbs of the garden. What fruit can they bear? The scattering of Babel came of human speech when languages were multiplied, and the united race split up into fragments. Wars and fighting, and hatred and bloodshed have sprung of talk, and bluster—these are *deadly* fruits, the very mention of which brings pain to the heart—surely it is in vain to look for much that is worth gathering from mouths and tongues! Great talkers are proverbially little *doers*, and the more talk, the less work. We may come for years looking for fruit on this fig tree, and find none. “Nothing but leaves” will be gathered by those who look to the lips for a harvest to fill the barn. This is most true. If you let the lips alone, they produce mischief and trouble, and not much else. An unrenewed tongue is almost worse than an unregenerate heart because, bad as the heart may be, there is *heart* in it—the tongue is often heartless—a mere sounding sham with no reality to support its bronze noise. Too many speak with the lips, and their heart is not in what they say. If the lips become the instruments of hypocrisy, and if the fruit of the lips is only the fruit of the lips, it is comparable to the apples of Sodom. The lips, moreover, cause pain and evil all around, which the heart, alone, cannot do. The heart is as an oven closed up. The tongue is a fire raging abroad, setting on flame the course of nature when it is, itself, set on fire by hell. The lips of the wicked are like the upas tree which drips poison.

We could readily dispense with the fruit of the lips as it comes from uncircumcised and unclean lips. Go out and gather a basketful of the fruit of the lips—gossiping, bickering, fault-finding, and murmuring, nonsense, vanity, falsehood, boasting, and infidelity. I will not tell you all that I might put into that basket! Certainly, if it were to be shred and poured out into the broth of daily life, we would soon have to say as they did who threw the wild cucumber into the pottage, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” The fruit of the lips tends to vanity, poverty, to sorrow, to shame, to death. The fruit of the lips is just what the root of an unrenewed, unregenerate heart causes it to be. You remember Aesop, and how wisely he kept his master’s command when he bade him provide for dinner the best things he could, and when they came together he set out tongues—nothing else but tongues! His master was pleased with his wit, though I am afraid the guests did not relish it, and he ordered him, the next time, to provide for dinner the *worst* things he possibly could. Tongues again—nothing else but tongues! Truly AEsop was wise *there*, for the fruit of the lips is sometimes the best thing in the world, and sometimes the worst thing in the world—it is a blessing and a curse—according to the man whose tongue speaks. The fruit of the lips may be compared to Jeremiah’s figs—the good, very good, but the bad, exceedingly bad, exceedingly ripe figs that cannot be eaten. Fruit of the lips, what shall I say about you? It might seem that the less we said the better, lest in our case, also, the fruit of the lips should add to the useless heap!

Our text tells us that God creates the fruit of the lips, but this must be understood, of course, with reservation. He does not create the fruit of the lips as we commonly see it, but the *good* fruit, the *true* fruit, the fruit worth gathering—that which *should be* the fruit of the lips—of this God is the Creator. The natural fruit is so evil it needs the Creator, again, to step in and make us new creatures, and our fruit new, also, or else it would remain so bad that the verdict upon it would be, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” And what is that fruit which the Creator produces from a source which is naturally so barren? First of all, it is the sacrifice of *thanksgiving*—“the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name” (Heb 13:15). The fruit of the lips which God creates should be, above all things, *praise*. We ought to delight to praise God—it should be our element, our occupation, our recreation, our very life! We are as much, and as evidently intended to praise God as angels are. When I look at a bird, if I study it awhile, I am convinced that it was made to sing. When we look at an angel, and study his formation and character, we are certain that he was ordained to praise God. And he that studies man, if he can see beyond the defects which the Fall has brought upon every organ, will be forced to see that he is a creature adapted for the

praise of God. Our tongue is the glory of our frame, and it is given us that we may give glory to Him who framed it! Articulate speech, which is denied to birds and beasts, is given to us for this major reason—that we may articulately and distinctly praise and magnify the name of the Most High. O man, however eloquent in oratory or charming in song your lips may be, they are fruitless if you do not extol your Maker with them! Your lips are as dry Sahara sand, or as the salt deserts where not a blade of grass can live, if from them there never springs the sweet flower of gratitude to God, fragrantly expressing itself in words of love. Your lips should drop honey as the honeycomb—a gentle dew of thankfulness should distil from them! They should be like the rose, sending forth perpetual perfume! Each word should be a fragrant leaf, scattering a sweet smell of adoration. The lips should be the gates of thankfulness, and from between them there should continually pour forth a wealthy traffic of song bearing abroad the products of a grateful heart worked in the forges of glowing thankfulness to God.

Another fruit of the lips should never be forgotten and that is *prayer*. This should be the fruit of renewed manhood at every age—the lips of little children can compass prayer, and the mouth of the aged may not fail to utter it. This is a God-created fruit! He that abounds in it is as a vine which God has blessed. Woe unto the mouth which is silent at the mercy-seat, for it will, one day, be dumb at the judgment-seat! Those lips are cursed that never pray! Those lips shall blister with unutterable pain that never pray! “Behold, he prays,” is an absolutely necessary sign of the possession of divine grace in the heart. True praise never flowered from those lips upon which prayer has never blossomed. You can be sure of this, that prayer and praise are grapes of the same cluster, and the lips which are barren of the one are bare of the other. These two fruits of the lips, God creates wherever His grace enters.

Furthermore, when there is prayer and praise in us, another fruit of the lip is *testimony*. Do you produce this, dear friends? Has God created it from your lips? It is the bearing witness to others of what God can do because you have *received* it in your own experience. God blesses us on purpose that we may tell other poor souls how He can bless the sons of men! And yet there are Christians—at least I *hope* they are Christians—who appear to have received great mercy from God, but they keep the matter hidden. Oh, be not such, I pray you! If you have good tidings in your heart, bring forth the fruit of the lips, and tell it. “I would stammer,” says one. There is a great beauty in the stammering of earnestness! “I could never be eloquent,” says another. Yet there is much true eloquence where there is no appearance of it! It matters not when a man cannot speak his heart, if you can read in his face that he would speak with the tongues of angels if he could, for he feels that his theme transcends his utmost ability. Fine words are not forceful—it is the *heart* which prevails. Tell your neighbor that Jesus died. Tell your neighbor that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Tell your neighbor he is welcome to Christ—tell your neighbor Christ has saved you! Do not hesitate to tell him of your own tasting and handling of the good word of life, for this is a most profitable fruit of the lips! What is more likely to prevail with a man than brotherly testimony? How can we so surely attract men to Canaan as by showing its Eshcol clusters, setting them forth with earnest speech, as the Holy Spirit enables us? These discourses of mine are the fruit of my lips. I cannot tell you how much I wish they were more worthy of my Master’s honor, but, such as they are, you all have the benefit of them, and they lay you under an obligation to yield your fruit unto others. I am not called to bear witness alone, and when I have borne my fruit, and you are refreshed, it is your bounden duty to go and bring forth the same fruit for the refreshment of others. Thus much about the threefold fruit of the lips.

Now, there is one renowned topic upon which the lips ought always to be able to speak, and that blessed subject is summed up in the two words of my text, “Peace, peace.” “I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace.” The lips ought to be occupied with the subject of peace. This should be their breath. As Saul breathed out threats, so should we breathe out peace, and yet again, peace—a double peace from our two lips. From the mouth of truth should come kisses of peace, words of peace, the breath of peace. This is the best lip-salve—“Peace, peace.” Nothing can so sweeten the breath as “Peace, peace.” Nothing can so flavor the palate, and delight the heart as this “Peace, peace,” felt within and breathed without. No teeth of ivory, nor lips of coral are complete in loveliness till there glistens over all the brightness of peace! Fierce speech becomes not loveliness. Threats and clamor destroy beauty. The charm of the lips is peace. So I am going to take those two words, and recommend them to you as a fruit of the lips which God creates. May the Lord help us all to go out of this place with this on our lips—“Peace, peace.”

I. We shall employ these words in four ways, and we shall commence by using them as THE CRY OF THE AWAKENED.

When men are awakened, by the grace of God, into a consciousness of their true condition, they find themselves at war with God, and at war with their own consciences, and consequently they begin to cry, “Peace, peace”—eagerly longing to end the dreadful conflict in which they find themselves engaged. While a man is dead in trespasses and sins—where nature left him, and where the devil keeps him—he has a deadly calm of mind. He is not troubled. He has no bonds in his death, should he die, nor none in his life while he is drunk with sin. He is like a brute beast, looking no further than to the pasture in which he feeds—he lives for the present, and as long as his bodily needs are satisfied, he is content. When the Spirit of God awakens thoughts of higher things in him, the whole matter is changed. He thinks of God, and laments that he has forgotten his Maker. He thinks of that Maker’s law, and perceives that he has constantly broken it. Indeed, he has never *regarded* it, but treated it as a thing of nothing. He thinks of death, and he says, “I must die, but I am unprepared.” He thinks of eternity, of that other world—that lasting world beyond time—that world where we must dwell forever, and he cries, “Where shall I dwell? Where will my portion be?” He feels it cannot be among the sanctified, for he is not one of them. He cannot hope to see the face of God with joy, for he has never sought that face, nor cared for the knowledge of God’s ways. As He begins thinking of these high themes, conscience sets before his mind the Day of Judgment. He sees the heavens on fire, and the great Judge calling all men to account—and he is sorely troubled. He sees heaven open, and all its glory, but he fears that he will be excluded, for he has been a rebel against the Lord! He looks down to hell with all its terror, and it seems to gape for *him*, as for one most suitable to be its everlasting prey!

Do you wonder, then, if the man is tormented with internal strife, and with horror of a war without? He has no rest, and he cries, “Peace, peace”—the cry only echoes in his ears, for what peace can there be for him? Very likely a worldling comes along and says, “You are melancholy. Do not give way to such low spirits. I count it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away. Come with me where they make merry.” He goes, but, somehow or other he sees that all the gold is gilt, and all the finery is flimsy, and that there is nothing in the mirth. The sport is tame and dull to him, and he is duller than ever. He does not enjoy what once was the delight of his eyes. He leaves, and when they ask him to visit their haunts, again, he says, “No, no. My heart seems heavier there than when I am alone.” “As vinegar upon niter, so is he that sings songs to a sad heart.” There is no suitability in worldly merry-making to ease a tortured spirit. The awakened sinner cries, “Peace, peace! Oh that I had peace!”

Then there visits him one who knowingly whispers, “You need not disturb yourself. These things are not so. Do you not know that these are all bugbears of a past generation? We men of modern thought have made great discoveries, and changed all the fears of our benighted ancestors into a brave unbelief! You can live at ease. Do not fret yourself about sin, or heaven, or hell, or eternity.” Vain are these stale skepticisms! The man is too much in earnest to be drugged with such soporifics. Boastful unbelief has small power over an agonized soul! God Himself has convinced this man of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and though he tries to disbelieve he cannot! Conviction haunts him, follows him into his chamber, robs him of his rest, and he cries, “I gladly would be an unbeliever if I could, but I cannot! Oh that I had peace! Oh that I had peace!”

Mr. Worldly Wiseman calls upon him, with his friend, Dr. Legality, and his assistant-surgeon, Mr. Civility—and these try their Balm of Conceit, and Plaster of Natural Goodness. Dr. Legality finds his patient disturbed with the threats of the gospel, and the doctrines of Holy Writ, and he says, “These things are quite true, but you need not worry because you have not been as bad as a great many, and if it goes hard with you, it will go very hard with most of the people. You are all right, for you have been honest, obliging, generous, and religious.” Yes, but if God has been dealing with this man, he will say, “But I am *not* all right! I feel that I deserve the wrath of God, and that goodness is not in me. You may think it is so, but I know myself, and I have looked into my heart, and I find all manner of evil there. Oh that I had peace! Oh that I had peace!” Self-righteousness is too short a bed for an awakened sinner to stretch himself on—neither can flatterers cajole him into a peace based upon forgetfulness of the divine law.

Then comes a priest and he exclaims, “Come with us, and undergo ceremonies, and take sacraments, and we will ease you of your burden.” Perhaps the poor man tries this, but though he tries it, he finds no rest whatever. No, the leprosy lies deep within, and no outward form can cleanse away the deep-seated

pollution. The burden presses on his heart, and therefore no manipulation of outward rites can remove the heavy load from him. His cry is, "Peace, peace, peace, peace! Oh that I could get it! Oh that I could get it! I would search through earth, and sea, and air, and hell, itself, if I might find it, and bless the grave if it would give it to me." Dear heart, I sympathize with you. I remember when I would have gone to the utmost verge of this green earth if I could have found peace. I tell you, racks and tortures I would have boldly endured! Prisons and dungeons I would have bravely entered, and battle and death I would have gladly encountered if I could have found peace from my accusing conscience; but I found none. I was like that serpent which is said to sting itself to death. "My thoughts," as George Herbert says, "were all a case of knives." Every motion of my mind seemed to drive a dagger into my heart! A volcano had burst up within my soul, and the burning lava of despair flowed over all. I was no fool, nor was I under a delusion. I think I was never saner than at that dread period of my life—certainly I was never more seriously in earnest! I was not a simpleton scared of his own shadow, but I had cause to be disquieted, for actual guilt was upon me—not that I was worse than others in outward sin—but that I had such a sight and sense of my guiltiness that I could only cry out, "Woe is me! Oh, wretched man that I am!" Then my daily prayer was, "Peace, peace!" but I could not find it. This is a good cry, however, for every awakened spirit. I would put it into the mouth of every penitent—rather may the Lord *Himself* create it there as the fruit of the lips. "Peace, peace."

II. Secondly, our theme is much more cheerful when we see that this is THE ANSWER OF THE SAVIOR.

It is the fruit of the Savior's lips, whose lips are as lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh. It is He that comes to a soul, and says, "Peace, peace." Oh, did you ever see Him as dying of sin? If you have never seen Him with the eyes of faith, you do not know what peace means. After this fashion He shows Himself. He looks upon the sinner, troubled and tossed to and fro, and He says, "What ails you?" "My sin," says the sinner, "has utterly condemned me." "Do you not know that I bore it 1,800 years ago and more, in My own body on the cross?" "Yes, Lord, I have heard that You did something of the kind, but did You bear it so that I need not bear it?" Then the Redeemer shows that He bore the burden of guilt effectually, and carried it away into the land of forgetfulness, and, moreover, He makes clear the truth of God that if He took our sin, it can never be laid on us, for it is not consistent with the Father's justice, first to punish the Substitute for sin, and then to punish the offender, also. That were to make a *mockery* of Christ Jesus by making Him a Substitute, and then punishing those for whom He stood as a Surety! Do you see that, poor soul? Is it not clear enough that if the Surety is sued for the debt, and is made to discharge it, the original debtor is free? Rest in the fact that this is the believer's case.

"But," says the heart, "my Lord, I know that You did die. I see Your wounds, I mark Your open side, but tell me, did You die for *me* in particular?" "Will you trust Me, soul? Will you trust Me wholly?" "Ah, that I will, my Lord!" "Then I bore your sin. I was punished in your place. Your iniquity has ceased to be. Your sins I have cast into the depths of the sea. Your transgression shall never be mentioned against you again forever! Go and sin no more. Peace, peace!" What can break a peace like this? Why need I fret about sin which is hurled into oblivion? Why should I despair because of my guilt, and reckon myself condemned? I am *not* condemned, for Jesus was condemned for me—even He in whom my spirit fixes all her trust. He paid my debts and discharged my liability to justice, and therefore my soul is clear! Peace, peace! Was there ever peace like this? Glory be to my Redeemer for such rest! Truly *God* has given us this repose—

*"O You who did Your glory leave
Apostate sinners to retrieve
From nature's deadly fall,
You have purchased me with a price,
Nor shall my crimes in judgment rise,
For You have borne them all."*

But did you ever see Christ as He is risen from the dead? Here is another vision of consolation, another fountain of peace. The poor heart lies prostrate at the Savior's feet, and cries, "I see You, my Lord! I see how You have put away my sin, and I am at peace! But alas, I am a poor fool, and shall sin again, and I have a wayward, wandering heart that will soon be away over the mountains leaping into sin again. How can I hope to enter heaven?" To this the Lord Jesus replies most sweetly, "Do you not know that I am risen from the dead? I am He that lives, though once I died for sin. I am that great Shepherd who lives to take care of His own flock. Because I live, you shall live, also. I am able also to save them to the

uttermost that come unto God by Me, seeing I always live to make intercession for them.” Do you know the peace which the resurrection of the Lord Jesus brings into the spirit? If so, you find rich fruit hanging upon Jesus’ lips. He who knows the virtue of the living Lord, at once concludes that the future is as safe as the past! The slain Savior has slain our past sins, and the living Savior lives to take care of our eternal life, and to bring us to God’s right hand at the last. See how Jesus says, “Peace, peace, peace! All is well.”

Did you ever see Jesus as He sits there triumphant at the Lord God’s right hand? I hope you have, because a poor, tried spirit is greatly comforted by that sight. The downcast one exclaims, “My Lord, I know You will take care of me *here*, for I perceive that You live to provide for me. But I shall have to die, and what shall I do *then*? My Lord, I am afraid to die! It is grim work—dying. It is a path I never trod before. What shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?” Jesus answers such fears in His own sweet fashion by saying, “Do you not know that I am risen from the dead, and that I have gone into glory to prepare a place for you? I will come to you at the last, and I will take your spirit away to dwell with Me forever. You need not fear to die, for he that lives and believes in Me shall never die. He that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I will help you. Death shall be no death to you! I will take your soul away, and you shall never know it till you see Me face to face! As for your poor dust, it shall lie in the grave a little while, but I will take care of every atom of it, and when I shall descend on the last day, My archangel shall sound his trumpet, and your poor body shall rise again, only more fair and beautiful than when you had it in its best estate below—and so you shall be forever with Me, both as to body and soul.” Does not this breathe, “Peace, peace, peace”?—

*“Surely the last end
Of the good man is peace!
How calm his exit!
Night dews fall not more
Calmly on the ground,
Nor weary worn out winds
Expire so softly.”*

If I were to go on picturing our glorious Lord Jesus Christ in any and all of His relationships to us, we should, in each case, hear Him say, “Peace, peace.” His voice is the sovereign balm which heals every wound, the cordial which removes every fear! No distress or amazement can seize upon you for which, in Christ, there is not a peace that passes all understanding to keep your heart and soul against all dread. This is the fruit of the lips of the Well-Beloved—peace, peace, peace. If you do not come to Him, you will receive no peace! If you do not stay near Him, you will retain no peace! And if you do not come growingly nearer and nearer to Him, you will miss much of the peace that you might have had. Abide in Christ Jesus, and let Him abide in you, and you shall have abundance of peace so long as the moon endures!

A soldier in the Crimean war, as he lay dying, was visited by a worthy missionary. The young man asked his visitor to read a chapter to him, and the chapter chosen was John 14. When he came to this verse—“Peace I leave with you,” the soldier was almost in the throes of death, but he said to the reader, “Sir, that is the peace which I enjoy. I have had it for years.” “Peace I leave with you.” “Now,” he said, “if I have known this peace—and I have had it for years—I shall not lose it now, but shall die triumphantly.” And so he did! Can you, my hearer, say tonight that you have that peace? If you have it now, you shall have it in your dying hour! Could you say what Dr. Watts said to his host, Sir Thomas Abney? He said, “Sir Thomas, I thank God that for many a month I have been able to say, ‘It is a matter of perfect indifference to me, when I fall asleep at night, whether I wake up in this world or in another.’” I well remember reading the old story of a Methodist who was pressed into the army some 50 or 60 years ago who had his leg carried away in battle, and lay bleeding on the ground. When they carried him off the field, he said, “I am as happy as a man can be while out of heaven.” They said he was mad! O for more of such glorious madness! To be able to say, when your limb is shot away, and you are bleeding away your life, “I am as happy as a man can be out of heaven,” why there is something in that! This must be the finger of God! Where else can such triumph over pain and weakness be found? What voice but that of Jesus can, in such a storm, command a heavenly calm? Jesus, Master, whose message to Your people is always, “Peace, peace,” speak that divine word to me, and to all Your troubled ones! Stand in our midst and say, “Peace be unto you,” and peace shall be ours!

III. Thirdly, I am going to use these words as THE SONG OF THE TRUE BELIEVER.

He who has really seen Christ, and placed his trust in Him, can now sing, “Peace, peace, peace.” What a thrice accursed thing is war! I believe with Benjamin Franklin that there never was a good war, and there never was a bad peace. War is unmitigated mischief from end to end, and peace is a thing to rejoice in, take it in whatever light you will. Killing and slaying, devastating and burning are sport for fiends and for fiends, alone! True men, if once called to battle, are the last persons who would lightly enter upon it again. It is an awful and terrible thing. I remember reading that when the last great war was over—I mean the greatest war of all, in which we were so long engaged with the Bonapartes—news of the peace came to a certain town. It was only gently whispered that there was peace, but it was all over the town in a few minutes! Everybody ran through the streets! Bread had been sent up to an awful price by the war, and everybody was weary with the taxes, the slaughter of soldiers, and the perpetual fear of invasion. A man ran down the street shouting, “Peace, peace, peace, peace,” and everybody was glad! All manner of good things were wrapped up in the one word, “peace”—families would no longer be divided, trade would no longer be crippled, famine would no more devour the land. Now the loaf would be within the reach of the poor and the hungry—and the widow might keep her sons at home, safe from the cannon’s mouth. “Peace, peace,” they cried, and within an hour there were bells ringing from every steeple, and as the sun went down there were candles in every window! Everybody must have an illumination because peace had come!

Now, if peace is so precious as to *temporal* things, it is equally precious as to eternal things! And if a man has once seen Jesus Christ, it is the joy of his life to sing, “Peace, peace.” Here stands the reconciled man, and he looks up to heaven through the pure blue air, past yon stars, endless leagues beyond imagination’s utmost stretch! He looks up, and his mind conceives of God, and his heart feels, “I am at peace with Him. Though He is a consuming fire, I am at peace with Him! With the great Father I am at peace! Though it is very tempestuous round about Him, yet I am at peace with Him. I am at peace with the eternal Son! Though He shall break His enemies with a rod of iron, He will never break me—I am at peace with Him. I am at peace with the Holy Spirit, for though to blaspheme Him is death without hope of mercy, yet I am at peace with Him—He will never destroy me.” What a peace this is—peace *with* God, the peace *of* God, *perfect peace*! Having this peace, every angel is my friend, every cherub is my guardian, and all the hosts in glittering ranks above—of angelic spirits, and unfallen, and of human spirits saved and washed in the blood—all are my friends, for I have peace with the armies of heaven if I have peace with the Lord of hosts! How delightful to look all around you and to feel confident that providence is on your side! The wheels are stupendous, and the results that come of their revolution are mysterious and terrible—but let the wheels revolve—they cannot hurt a child of God! All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose! There is peace in all events when there is peace with heaven. The beasts of the field are in league with us, and the stones of the field are at peace with us when we are at peace with God! It is most sweet to feel that wherever you are, everything is at peace with you—and then to look inside into this little world where there once raged such fierce battles, and there, also, to feel the sprinkled blood—this, this is JOY! Conscience is quiet, fear has subsided, the deadly dread is gone, all is quiet, and all is well!

To feel that you have forgiven every enemy if you have any—that you do not bear a recollection of an injury—this also is a brave easement of the heart. As the tablets of the Romans, when they had written upon the wax, were afterwards rolled over with a hot iron to produce a complete erasure, so by grace we are enabled to smooth out of the soul every angry line, and to begin life anew as to our fellow men! Revenge and malice are unknown among true Christians. I have no more memory of ill towards any man that lives than an unborn babe. This is a clear atmosphere to live in! How different from the thunder-charged air of envy, malice, and hate! “You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” Blessed are the men who live in this peace—peace of God’s giving! Peace of the Holy Spirit’s working! Peace above, and peace below, peace within, and peace around—peace, peace—the blessed fruit of the lips!

IV. I close by using my text in a fourth way, practically, by saying that this should be THE MOTTO OF EVERY BELIEVER.

It has been his song for himself—now let it be his motto in dealing with other people. This should be his spirit and desire in the church—“Peace, peace.” I thank God that we have enjoyed peace as a church these many years, but I have known certain churches where peace would be a novelty—a novelty which

I recommend them to try! Some little churches seem to think that they must have an angry discussion every month, or else they are living beneath their gospel privileges. This leads to heart-burnings, and promotes splits and divisions, and these are as frequent among them as fights at an Irish wake. They need a new minister every now and then, for they consider their lack of prosperity to be the *minister's* fault—and then they need a fresh set of deacons, for the evil is thought to be the deacons' fault. By-and-by they discover that some leading man, or, what is worse, some leading woman, is at the bottom of the evil, and they must get rid of him or her, and then all will go right! And so they practice the process of dismemberment—cutting off one part of the body, and then another till they think the smaller they become the better they will be. What a mistake! Do they think to find peace by breaking into pieces? The more Christians are divided, the more they can subdivide, and the smaller the sect, the more prepared is it for another schism. Brothers and sisters, whenever you fall to quarrelling I shall know that the Spirit of God has gone from you! Up to now we have put up with one another very well, by God's grace, and I hope we shall continue to do so. I do not suppose you ever thought that I was perfect—if you did, you did not know much about me! I knew very well that *you* are not perfect. I never flattered you from the very beginning, and therefore I am not disappointed in you. We have gone on wonderfully well with each other, considering how imperfect we are—and I trust that the grace of God, which has kept so large a multitude together in love and peace—will continue to do it, to His own glory.

Now, especially when I am away, if any enemy brings strange fire to set the church alight with it, I pray you who are older and wiser than others to keep your buckets full of water, and stand ready to quench the first spark of ill feeling. You, good brothers and sisters, who are rather fond of talking, if you see a little blaze beginning, leave off your talking, for fear you should be adding fuel to the flame! Do not repeat what you have heard against a brother, but ring the curfew, and cover the fire. Pull the logs all apart, and throw the holy water of love over the hot ashes! Do not let the fire of anger burn. Why should we? We have to live together in heaven forever—we may as well enjoy happy fellowship here! May the Lord grant us to feel the force of those heavenly principles which will enable us to live in peace and quiet for many and many a year to come! I would like every member of the church to go about saying within himself, "Peace, peace. I am a peace-maker in the church, and if I ever must be a peace-breaker, it shall not be in the house of God, among the family of the Lord Jesus."

We should labor to carry out the same quiet spirit in the family. When you get home, do not change, "Peace, peace," into scolding and nagging. "If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men." The apostle says, "If it is possible," because he knew that it would be a very difficult thing, always to be peaceable with everybody, for some people are so unreasonable that they are *never* at peace till they are at war, and never quiet till they are making a disturbance. Be it ours under great provocation still to cry, "Peace, peace." Put up with a great deal—bear, and bear, and bear, and bear, and bear—I have not time to repeat the word 70 times seven! They will most surely conquer who can most completely submit, for in this world, he that would be greatest must be least, and he that can stoop the lowest shall rise the highest! I do not think there is much in a heritage worth fighting for compared with brotherly unity. Family peace and love are worth more than a disputed will can ever yield. The game of quarrelling is not worth the candle. When I have had to compose family differences, I have usually found that the misunderstanding began about nothing, and went on about nothing—and yet the mischief done is frequently terrible! When I have to make peace, I like to have some real injury, injustice, or wrong to deal with—something that I can handle, judge, and condemn—an invisible, misty, indefinable suspicion is hard to overcome. When there is nothing in the squabble, peace-making is difficult work. There is a great tingle-tangle over nothing. You cannot get at it. It is a sort of stinging jellyfish which you *feel* but cannot grasp! Loving bonds are broken, and there is ill-blood between Christian men and Christian women who ought to love one another, and all about—about—*nothing*! Now, you Christian people, go about with this as your password—"Peace, peace, peace, peace." This will quiet the worst scolding of a wife that ever wearied a man—peace, peace! This will sober the most outrageous husband that ever tried a woman—peace, peace! Cultivate peace in the home garden whatever you do elsewhere.

When peace reigns in your own family, go into the world with the same watchword—"Peace, peace." Do not set dogs by the ears, but tame lions and tigers! Compose differences, and make people friends. If certain persons were dropped into the Garden of Eden, they would be the serpent in it! But there are others who, if you were to set them down in a village distracted with strife and contention, they

would be lumps of love to sweeten every bitterness. Try and be just such. Members of the Tabernacle, especially, let your motto always be, “Peace, peace,” among your neighbors, for the glory of God!

What a difference there will be when this is taken up among all Christian denominations—when there shall be no more envying and strife between this denomination and that, but each one shall be saying in Christ’s name, “We are brethren—peace, peace.” How silly it is for one clique of good people to be setting up Mr. So-and-So as “the greatest preacher that ever lived.” How idle for others to reply, “No, he is not. So-and-so preaches better.” Let all this be silenced while we cry, “Peace, peace!” None of us who are ministers preach as well as we ought to do, and none of you who are hearers live as you ought to live. When you hear anything like crying up of such poor mortals as we are, cry, “Peace, peace,” to such nonsense! We are all servants of one Master—and may the Lord make us all better *servants*! Let peace ring the death-knell of petty jealousies, and may all the saints be visibly one in Christ Jesus!

May the day come when, all the world over, there shall be peace! Peace to Afghan and to Zulu, as it is today to Prussian and to Frenchman and to Englishman. Let us wish “Peace, peace” to all born of woman. May this blessed word be rung out as a clarion note beneath these heavens till men shall recognize that they make one family, and God is the one great Father! You nations, learn war no more! “Peace, peace, peace.” Catch the words, you winds, and carry them—“Peace, peace, peace!” Hear the words, you stars, and shine them out tonight—“Peace, peace.” Rise up, O sun, in the morning, and over all rejoicing lands pour forth, with your light and warmth, peace and quietness! May peace be with you, my brothers and sisters, now and forever. Amen and amen!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 57:15-21; 58:1-12.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—23 (VERS. II), 704, 722.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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